

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TORONT 00071 131820Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 COME-00 TRSE-00
SEC-01 L-03 HA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02
PRS-01 OPIC-06 FRB-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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-----008825 140214Z /72

R 131728Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6786
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS TORONTO 0071

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, PINT, CA
SUBJ: REACTION TO SUN LIFE DECISION TO LEAVE QUEBEC

REF: MONTREAL 043; QUEBEC 005

1. WHILE OPPOSITION PROVINCIAL PARTIES HAVE BOTH REQUESTED
PREMIER DAVIS ATTEMPT CONVINCE SUN LIFE REMAIN MONTREAL,
ONTARIO UNION LEADERS URGING QUEBEC WORKERS MOVE COVERAGE
FROM SUN AND SUGGEST BOTH NATIONALIZATION OF COMPANY AND
RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORTS OF CAPITAL AND TORONTO STAR HAS
EDITORIALLY URGED SUN REMAIN MONTREAL, GENERAL ATTITUDE
HERE BEST DESCRIBED AS SORROW THAT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE FORCED
MOVE BUT THAT SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES ARE REAL AND COMPANY
COMPELLED BY ITS OBLIGATIONS TO POLICYHOLDERS TO MAKE THIS
DECISION.

2. TORONTO AREA FEDERAL LIBERAL CAUCUS RETREATED FROM
HARD LINE EXPRESSED BY SOME OF ITS MEMBERS OVER WEEKEND
BUT CONTINUED TO URGE RECONSIDERATION OF DECISION BY
SUN DIRECTORS.

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3. WITH EXCEPTION OF TORONTO STAR, NEWSPAPERS IN
TORONTO, EDITORIALY AND IN COLUMNS, HAVE SUPPORTED SUN
LIFE IN MAKING THIS DIFFICULT DECISION AND HAVE COMMENTED
ON EXCESSIVE REACTIONS OF MINISTER PARIZEAU AND TORONTO
FEDERAL LIBERALS. TORONTO STAR'S BUSINESS COLUMNIST
JACK MCARTHUR ALSO IN THIS CATEGORY AND DEVOTED COLUMN

ON JAN. 11 TO DISCUSSION OF ABSURDITY PROPOSALS FOR
ADVANCED CONSULTATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT CITED BY
POLITICIANS AND LABOR AS SHOULD HAVE OCCURED IN SUDBURY
MINE CLOSURE AND WITH SUN LIFE. MCARTHUR TOOK VIEW THAT
ONCE RATIONAL BUSINESS DECISION MADE, THERE IS NO POINT
OF CONSULTING WITH GOVERNMENT AS POLITICIANS WILL ONLY
USE SITUATION FOR PERSONAL OR PARTY ADVANTAGE AT POSSIBLE
EXPENSE TO COMPANY IN TIME, REPUTATION OR FREEDOM OF
ACTION.

4. REACTIONS HAVE ALSO DESCRIBED LIBERAL/NDP/UNION
PRESSURE SECURE REVERSAL SUN LIFE DECISION AS ATTEMPT
INSULATE QUEBEC VOTERS FROM EFFECTS OF THEIR FREE CHOICE
IN NOVEMBER 1976 ELECTIONS ON VAGUE ASSUMPTION THAT
SITUATION WILL CHANGE IN FUTURE. ALSO THAT SUN BEING
ASKED TO FIGHT BATTLE OVER LANGUAGE ABANDONED BY
TRUDEAU AND OTTAWA. SUN LIFE ANNOUNCEMENT CALLED OPEN
STATEMENT AND FAVORABLY COMPARED TO REORGANIZATIONS,
STAFF REALIGNMENTS, ETC. WITH WHICH OTHER FIRMS HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED SAME END WHILE DENYING MAJOR MOVE.

5. PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ATTEMPTING REMAIN
LOWKEY ON QUESTION AND HAVE GENERALLY NOT FIGURED IN
MEDIA COVERAGE.
DIGGINS

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NNN

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